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THREE YEARS AND A HALF OF PIUS X.

BY A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

IN beginning to describe the three and a half years of the pontificate of Pius X, we find our mind reverting to a passage which Carlyle wrote in 1850, concerning the opening months of the reign of Pius IX. The words occur in the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," and are as follows:

"Not long ago the world saw, with thoughtless joy, a real miracle, not heretofore considered possible or conceivable in the world,—a Reforming Pope. A simple, pious creature, a good country priest, invested unexpectedly with the tiara, takes up the New Testament, and declares that this henceforth shall be his rule of governing. No more finesse, chicanery, hypocrisy, or false or foul dealing of any kind; God's truth shall be spoken, God's justice shall be done, on the throne called of St. Peter; an honest Pope, Papa, or Father of Christendom shall preside there. . . . The European populations everywhere hailed the omen with shouting and rejoicing, leading articles and tar-barrels. Thinking people listened with astonishment. . . . For to such men it was very clear how the poor devoted Pope would prosper with his New Testament in his hand."

The sinister prediction implied in these last words came true, as the world knows; and Pius IX, who began as a humane and liberal sovereign, not only became a despot, but did his utmost to make despotism a part of Catholic doctrine in the Syllabus of 1864. And if we apply this whole passage to Pius X—for it can be applied to him with astonishing aptness—the prediction will be again likewise fulfilled.

The present Pope is a man whose simplicity and intentional sanctity it is impossible to doubt. He had no ambition for the office which he holds; he had no recommendation for it save that he stood aloof from faction and intrigue, and enjoyed a reputation for conspicuous virtue. He ascended the ancient throne of the Papacy amid the rejoicing of the whole Catholic world; and,

when he announced in almost the first public words which he uttered as Pope, that his motto would be, "*Restaurare omnia in Christo*"—to renew all things in Christ—we hoped that we should see in the Papal government a spirit of moderation and unworldliness, such as the world has hardly observed there since the first Gregory or the first Leo. Thoughtful Catholics have long been weary of Pontiffs that were great diplomats, great builders, great theologians. A great *Christian* is what they have been sighing for; a Christian, that is, in its one, sole, proper meaning—a man, namely, who is like Christ. "*Restaurare omnia in Christo*" gave us a token of such a man; and, with ardent hope, we looked to see how Cardinal Sarto, having become Pius X, would live up to those mighty words. Would he cut loose from the abominable traditions that have disgraced the Roman See, and alienated from it the most progressive nations of the world? Would he make an end of that thirty years' anathema passed upon the kingdom of Italy, the result of which has been the practical apostasy of the peninsula, while the world has looked on in amazement that Christ's delegate on earth should sacrifice souls rather than sacrifice temporal dominion? Would he diminish the unholy monopoly of Italians in governing the Church, and allow some representation to other countries which are wearied to the limit of patience with the ignorant faction of foreigners who rule them with whip and spur? Would he permit us to exercise a decent portion of self-government, so that we might retain a little self-respect by not having to apply to Rome to inquire about every detail of our own affairs? Would he introduce honesty and truthfulness into Papal diplomacy, fairness into the appointments of bishops, and charity into ecclesiastical censures and corrections?

These were some of the questions that stirred the hearts of multitudes of Catholics, when, three and a half years ago, Pius X entered upon his pontificate with the New Testament in his hand. These questions have received a very decisive answer. Pius X is as terrible a disappointment as Pius IX was. Of the New Testament spirit there is none, under the present régime, at Rome; and one will have to turn back to some of the most despotic Papal reigns to find a parallel to the bigotry, cruelty, hatred of truth, and defiance of civilization which characterize the Papacy at this hour. Harsh as this language seems, proof

will be given in the course of this article that it is not too harsh to be strictly true.

Not that Pius X is one whit less pious and disinterested to-day than he was three years and a half ago, or ten or twenty-five years ago. He is as well-meaning as ever; he still is fain to think that he is governing by New Testament methods. There is no change in his purposes or *bona fides*. What has happened is this: Pius X has had to deal chiefly with two classes of problems, one, politico-ecclesiastical, the other, intellectual. In managing the former, the gigantic fabric of centuries of Papal traditions, with their secular aims, their autocratic pride, their immovable stubbornness and their theocratic pretensions, has imposed itself upon his mind as a thing sanctioned of Heaven, as an inviolable apparatus of dogma upon which it would be sacrilege to lay irreverent hands. Now, the normal ecclesiastical mind is so drilled and disciplined in adhesion to dogma that, at the behest of dogma, it can readily lose the elementary spiritual insight of the unsophisticated Christian heart, and can become blind and deaf to the plainest teachings of Gospel Christianity. Not much proof is needed for that statement. Look at those old-time Dominican monks who tortured the heretic in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and burned him in the public square to make an orthodox holiday. Those men were sincere. They put heart and fervor into every psalm they chanted while the victim shrieked in agony. They devoutly believed in the Papal bull which gave them a plenary indulgence every time they assisted at the trial or torture of a heretic. None of their monstrous violations of the religion of Jesus, their blasphemous pretences to do such things in His name, were perceived by them to be wicked, because their primary moral sense had been perverted by what they thought was divine dogma. And, if these good men have gone without a scruple from meditating on the Beatitudes to presiding at an *auto da fé*, why cannot a pious bishop ascend the Papal throne, and, thinking that the traditions of that throne—the worldly, pompous, tyrannical traditions of it—are as dogmas, make himself as much a despot as Julius II or Pius V? A genius, it is true, may rise above his office, under whatever pile of accumulated perversity it may be buried; a broadly cultivated man will be able to see the worthlessness of any claim put forward in behalf of theology which outrages the plain dictates of his religious

nature. But, as Pius X is not a genius, as his culture is scarcely mediocre, he has submissively surrendered to the historical Papal spirit, and has made himself believe that it is of God. Let us give some illustrations of how this good man has been perverted and overcome by the venerable sham of the traditions of his chair.

In October, 1903, the King of Italy visited the President of the French Republic at Paris. Common courtesy, as well as international good-will, required that the visit be returned. Accordingly, early in 1904 the Chamber voted 450,000 francs to defray the expenses of President Loubet's journey to Rome. It was further understood, indeed M. Loubet himself had said it, that the President would call officially upon the Pope. Now, as every one knows, the Papacy, since the fall of the temporal power in 1870, has forbidden the heads of Catholic states to visit the Italian King in his capital, because this monarch is regarded by the Pope as a despoiler of the Church's domain, and as such is excommunicated. This Papal veto had never been disregarded during the reigns of Pius IX and Leo XIII. By stretching charity, one might forgive this attitude in Pius IX, inasmuch as it was he who had to suffer the first shock of spoliation; under Leo XIII it became obsolete and ridiculous; and in these days it is a miserable, fictitious, un-Christian pretence, which offends the good sense and morality of mankind. In the first place, the Catholics of the world are overwhelmingly against the restoration of the temporal power. In the second place, the former Papal territories are now by the highest right the legitimate possession of the kingdom of Italy, for the simple reason—a reason recognized in all law, canonical as well as civil—that the inhabitants of those territories are contented and loyal subjects of their present Government, and are so opposed to clerical domination that, if temporal power were restored to-morrow, they would rise in civil war against it. In the third place, the insistence upon temporal power for the last thirty-five years has had disastrous consequences for religion in Italy itself. The young Italian has, practically, to choose between patriotism and apostasy. In the old Papal states, Catholics can take no part—*nè eletti nè elettori*—in the political life of their country, if they are to obey the Pope, and must isolate themselves into a perpetual clerical menace. There is no calculating what the Catholic Church has lost in membership, in prestige, in spiritual vitality, by this

scandalous clamor for provinces and principalities. If Pius X had put an end to it, a thrill of new life and exultant joy would have passed through the body of believers throughout the world. But no! the Pope, devoutly bearing his New Testament, has had his good heart blinded by the corrupt tradition which would put an earthly crown upon the head of Christ's delegate, and would surround the chair of Peter the fisherman with the barbaric pomp of secular kingship. He failed appallingly to rise to the splendid spiritual opportunity; and the French Foreign Office received from the Papal Secretary of State a letter protesting against the projected visit of M. Loubet, and intimating that the Pope could not receive him at the Vatican. This insult was all the more mischievous and un-Christian from the fact that, as M. Loubet himself gave warning, the anti-Catholic agitation in France would undoubtedly become more bitter if the nation saw its official head visited with so serious an indignity. This the President told to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, adding that he personally was averse to persecuting the Church. "But," he said, "this action of the Pope will disarm me, and make it impossible for me to allay the storm." Several French churchmen wrote to the Vatican, imploring the Pope to receive the President, and pointing out the immense effect for evil that a contrary course would produce. All was in vain. M. Loubet was told that Pius X would not admit him to the Vatican; and, more serious still, Merry del Val handed to each minister accredited to the Holy See a letter of complaint and protest against France. This letter was not intended for publication, but it saw the light through M. Jaurès, the Socialist, who procured it from the Prince of Monaco. The entire French nation was roused to fury; M. Nisard, ambassador at the Vatican, was recalled; and the dissolution of the Concordat became inevitable. Thus, by a haughty pertinacity in clamoring for temporal power, Rome pushed France further down the path of national apostasy. Can we wonder if thoughtful Catholics are asking which the court of Rome values more, the souls of men, or a greedy ambition, which is now all the worse from being both devoid of justice and devoid of hope?

Equally darkened have been the counsels of Pius X in regard to the movement for Catholic Democracy in Italy. For many years, the younger Italian Catholics, both priests and laity, have

been openly expressing their grief at the condition of religion in their country, and have been devising modern measures of enlightened zeal for furthering the cause of their faith. These men see Italian Catholicism paralyzed to a serious degree by formalism, and overgrown with superstition; they see the seminaries giving to future priests an inferior and antiquated education; they see that fatal aloofness of priest from people which has brought Catholicity in all Latin countries to its present decayed and moribund condition; they see their fellow Italians drifting in multitudes from the Church, as from a dead thing which has no vital part in modern society. And, at the spectacle, these zealous men are crying aloud to the Church to display an energetic apostolic spirit, to adopt modern methods, and to let in modern light. Their programme includes the dissemination of literature, the formation of working-men's clubs, the freer mingling of priest and people, the encouragement of patriotism, and concerted Catholic action for all good ends, moral, social and political.

It was an inspiring dream, as have been other similar dreams of earnest men who have endeavored to show that Catholicism can thrive in the atmosphere of modern liberty. But every one of these dreams has ended in disaster. Every movement for a hundred years—Gratry's, de Lamennais's, Montalembert's, Rosmini's—to reconcile the Papacy with progressive civilization has produced only martyrs, nothing else. The martyr of Italian Catholic Democracy is Don Romolo Murri, a noble and highly educated priest, whose single purpose is to serve his Church by bringing it into harmony with his country and the age. He is at this writing condemned, and forbidden to ascend the altar. Pius X has prohibited the Christian Democrats from taking any initiative of their own whatsoever. They must go to the bishops and to the Pope for the approval of every project, every book, pamphlet, or article which comes from them. They cannot open their mouths to utter a word of their social, political or religious programme, until the Italian Episcopate grants them permission. This, of course, means the absolute paralysis of the whole movement; it means the death of lay activity; it means silence for those young priests who have of late been too fond of using the hated word, "*modernità*." In consequence, the Christian Democrats have split in two; the conservatives, who wish to remain in

sterile submission, have gathered about the episcopal staff and kissed the sacred purple; the more energetic have formed a new society called the "*Lega Democratica Nazionale*." This association, while declaring frankly for an honorable independence from clericalism in purely political and social endeavor, affirms that it is unalterably Catholic, and wishes above all to promote the highest interests of the faith. A great number of young Italian Catholics have joined it, and many priests throughout Italy have expressed sympathy with its aim and spirit. The Pope became highly alarmed at these preliminary stirrings of liberty, and on the 28th of last July addressed to the bishops of Italy the encyclical, "*Pieni d'animo*," which is about the most disheartening Papal document since the Syllabus. The Pope exclaims that he is dismayed at the signs of insubordination among the younger Italian clergy and seminaries. He finds among them, he says, a thirst for mischievous novelty—*novità malsana*—and altogether too much fine talk about new departures in the Church, a new social vocation for the clergy, and that sort of thing. All this is abominable, and must be done away with by the most stringent acts of ecclesiastical authority. Accordingly, he legislates that no newspapers are to be allowed into Italian seminaries, nor any periodicals, save one or other which the bishop may consider harmless. No priests are to engage in social works of any kind, nor are they to write a line for publication, even on purely technical subjects, without the express permission and censorship of the bishops. And, as for the *Lega Democratica Nazionale*, if any priest dares to become a member of it, he is *ipso facto* suspended from all priestly functions.

All this is an old, old story; opposition to liberty, anathema against civilization, hatred of the light; and, if any Catholic in his zeal for the Church speaks out in behalf of the light, smash him with the bludgeon of condemnation! "*Restaurare omnia in Christo*" sounds like blasphemy from the Pius X of to-day.

One word more about the *Lega Democratica Nazionale*. Notwithstanding the encyclical of July 28th, the League held its first congress at Milan on September 15th. The inaugural address, delivered by Signor Gallarati-Scotti, contained the following magnificent words, magnificent from the point of view of courage, pure Catholicity and truth, but ominous for the traditional despotism of the Papal See. Said Gallarati-Scotti;

"Are we rebels? Rebellion there would be if we separated ourselves from the great life of Christian fellowship in the Church, of which the Pope is the head, the visible centre, and the spiritual guide. But it is not rebellion to stand forth in opposition to a theocracy disguised as religion which demands that we submit to it our every act and thought. This sort of submission would be not humility but humiliation. We are not rebels against the faith, nor against hierarchical authority in its true divine mission upon earth. No; we proclaim ourselves as one in Catholic faith with even the most illiterate old woman at her prayers. But we are rebels against a false conception of authority, . . . and against that ignorance of real religion which tries to give divine sanction to matters of mere secular policy and to transient phases of opinion, and would coerce the activity of a nation within antiquated forms, while refusing to permit that spontaneous development which alone can create the new institutions and adaptations demanded by Christian civilization."

If Catholicity has no room for men and sentiments like these, Catholicity must die.

We might go on to similar purpose with describing other features of the politico-ecclesiastical régime of Pius X. We might dwell, for example, upon the case of Bishop Bonomelli. This splendid prelate, bishop of Cremona, in his Lenten pastoral of 1906, came out explicitly and powerfully against union of Church and State. This is an opinion which no Catholic is supposed to hold. That Church and State ought to be united, and that the contrary view is abominable liberalism, is the position of Catholic theology, reaffirmed in the strongest language in the Syllabus of Pius IX. For obvious reasons, we American Catholics are not often reminded of this theological teaching. The fact is, American Catholics of any enlightenment, whether clerical or lay, stand squarely by our Constitution in this matter, and reject as an unholy impertinence the attempt of the Roman Curia to include this Church and State doctrine in the religion of the Son of God. But the Papacy clings to mediæval theocracy, and stubbornly refuses to admit the separation theory as anything better than a makeshift, which the Church tolerates only because she is obliged to tolerate it. So, when Bishop Bonomelli publicly advocated the modern thesis, the uproar was prodigious. The Lombard bishops protested to the Pope against this erring brother, and Pius X, in acknowledging their letter, said that Mgr. Bonomelli had been guilty of holding a liberal opinion which the Church had condemned and could never tolerate. In the midst of the disturbance the Bishop himself went to Rome,

and the Pope refused to see him. Pius's own good heart, and that New Testament which he meditates, would have undoubtedly suggested that a brother bishop be received, however great his fall. But the traditions of Papal despotism! How often have not piety and the Gospels gone down before them!

We can delay no longer on this side of the reign of Pius X; but we must say a few words, before concluding, on the intellectual problems with which the Pope has had to deal, and on the attitude which he has adopted toward scholarship. Catholic theology, like every other Christian theology, has had to take account in recent years of historical and Biblical criticism. The discoveries of archæology, the analysis of the sacred text, and the fresh light thrown upon Christian origins, have necessitated many far-reaching revisions of theological opinion. Loyal and truth-loving Catholic students have undertaken this hard task of harmonizing the substance of the ancient faith with the assured results of modern learning. Necessarily, these men have had to abandon many old views which were not strictly of faith—*de fide*—but which were part and parcel, nevertheless, of the traditional dogmatic theology. Against them a tremendous uproar has been raised by the conservatives, to whom scientific criticism is accursed. Our best scholars have been condemned, their writings have been put on the Index, and a violent effort is making by the official theologians of Rome to close the door in the face of scholarship. The situation is exceedingly serious. A bludgeon is not an argument; and putting a man on the Index will not stop research. Whatever Rome's power of repression may be, she cannot annihilate Truth; and, like wildfire, the "new" views of criticism are spreading among Catholics, and, despite the despairing rage of the Curia, are destined to take firm hold on the minds of educated laymen and priests. As to the policy of Pius X, amid this momentous domestic struggle, it can be characterized in no other way than as a brutal assault upon enlightenment. This page could be filled with the names of high-minded Catholic scholars who have suffered outrages to their convictions during the present pontificate. Some have had their published works condemned; others have been prohibited from publishing manuscripts that are ready for the press; many have been attacked by Roman theologians, and dare not reply; several will not put pen to paper, knowing that condemnation awaits them; and so on

through a whole catalogue of despotism. It is an era of darkness for the Catholic scholar; and no graver question could possibly be asked than how long these men who love Truth as they love God will endure the domination of an ignorant faction, which presumes to rule the world in the name of the Most High.

Let us give an instance of the intellectual tyranny that prevails under Pius X. For ten years the ablest Jesuit author in English was Father George Tyrrell of England. This man, after spending twenty-five years with the Jesuits, felt himself constrained to ask release from the Order, and about a year ago petitioned the General of the Society for honorable dismissal, in due form. While the petition was pending at Rome, an anonymous pamphlet appeared in Italy dealing with certain relations between criticism and theology, and certain adaptations which must be introduced into the theology of the future. The Jesuit General, already an enemy of Father Tyrrell, asking him to repudiate the authorship of the pamphlet. On Father Tyrrell's refusal to do so, the General expelled him from the Society under suspension; that is to say, Father Tyrrell could not exercise any priestly functions and was forbidden to receive the sacraments of the Church. As last Lent drew toward its close, Father Tyrrell wrote to the Cardinal-Prefect of the Roman Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for permission, if not to say mass, at least to receive the Eucharist, as every Catholic is bound to do, during the Lenten or Easter season. His letter, and along with it a still more urgent request later on, was absolutely ignored by Cardinal Ferrata. Finally, a more than usually tender-hearted Continental bishop wrote to Rome, asking if he might not receive Father Tyrrell into his diocese, and thus restore him to his proper priestly status. This letter was, of course, at once acknowledged by the Cardinal, who answered that Father Tyrrell would be permitted to enter the bishop's diocese and resume his suspended privileges, *on condition that he would submit his future epistolary correspondence to ecclesiastical supervision!* This infamous proposition called forth a letter from Father Tyrrell to Ferrata, which must have struck shame into the Curia, if shame had not long since ceased to dwell there. The English priest addresses the Italian Cardinal in the language of an outraged freeman, to whom servitude is not a virtue, but who holds liberty, truth and justice as supreme. The Englishman reminds the Italian that

the condition imposed by Rome disgraces the tribunal from which it proceeds, and tells him categorically that the condition is rejected. Sorrowful as it is to a priest to be held up before the world as degraded, he will suffer that indignity, he says; and, rather than fling his manhood beneath the heel of a Roman despot, he will live and die without his privileges and rights as a priest, trusting to God for vindication.

For evils of Papal despotism such as we have been describing, and we might mention many more, there is no remedy save one. Rome will never spontaneously reform. The episcopate is equally insensible to the need of a change. It is public opinion that must force relief from the hideous régime under which we have suffered so long. When Catholics tell their priests and bishops, face to face, that they are sick of Italian government without consultation, and Italian taxation without representation; when Catholic scholars refuse to sacrifice their reason at the dictation of the Roman tribunals which, in 1633, decided that it was damnable heresy to hold that the earth went round the sun; and when the *people*, by every organ of public utterance open to them, demand the purification of Catholicism, then, and not till then, Rome will yield; then, and not till then, the claim to govern by the New Testament will be a truth, and not a sham and a falsehood as it is now.

A CATHOLIC PRIEST.